



**EXCLUSIVE**  
WORLDWIDE

# *cool loco* **ASTANA**

ReThinkRelo series:

## **UNCONVENTIONAL TRAVEL TIPS**



Your guide  
**Vladyslava Lypska**

Culture

Food

Safety

Transport

Daily Life

Accommodation

Free Time

Local Trips

# here's WHAT'S INSIDE

ABOUT ASTANA	03
MAIN BUSINESS HUBS	04
BUSINESS LANDSCAPE	05
TOP NEIGHBORHOODS	07
ACCOMMODATION	09
PUBLIC TRANSPORT	10
MUST-SEE ATTRACTIONS	11
LOCAL CUISINE	13
DO IT LIKE A LOCAL	14
SAFETY FIRST	15



## DISCOVER MORE ON OUR BLOG

Explore RethinkRelo – our knowledge hub for relocation professionals, expats, and anyone adapting to life in a new city, featuring industry insights, expert advice and local guides.

[VISIT OUR WEBSITE](#)



# *about* ASTANA

## QUICK OVERVIEW

Astana is the capital of Kazakhstan and the country's main political, administrative, and rapidly developing business center. The city hosts national government institutions, international organizations, and major companies, while sectors such as finance, construction, and technology continue to grow. As a relatively young capital, Astana is known for its ambitious urban development and striking modern architecture.

Daily life in Astana blends a modern, well-planned city environment with a slower Central Asian rhythm. Wide boulevards, spacious parks, and large shopping centers shape everyday life, while cafés, cultural venues, and business centers create an active social and professional atmosphere for residents and visitors.

---

## KNOWN FOR ITS EXTREME CLIMATE

The city stands on the banks of the Ishim River in the vast northern Kazakh steppe. Astana is also famous for its extreme continental climate, with very cold winters and warm summers, which strongly influences urban life, architecture, and the popularity of indoor public spaces.

[VISIT OFFICAL WEBSITE](#)

[VIEW ON MAP](#)



# *main* BUSINESS HUBS

## **NURZHOL BUSINESS DISTRICT**

The symbolic administrative and business center of Astana with government ministries, international companies, and office towers. It is also close to major landmarks such as the Baiterek Tower.

## **ASTANA INTERNATIONAL FINANCIAL CENTRE (AIFC)**

A major financial hub operating within the Astana International Financial Centre complex at the Expo site. It hosts financial institutions, fintech companies, arbitration courts, and international investors.

## **EXPO BUSINESS ZONE**

Located around the former Expo grounds, this cluster includes technology companies, startups, innovation hubs, and research institutions. The futuristic architecture and infrastructure attract international conferences and corporate events.

## **MANGILIK EL AVENUE CORRIDOR**

A major avenue linking government buildings, universities, and corporate offices. The area also contains embassies and headquarters of major national companies.

# *Astana's* **BUSINESS LANDSCAPE**

## **INSIDE ASTANA'S ECONOMY**

Astana has evolved into a modern business hub in Central Asia, combining strong state support, international investment, and a steadily diversifying economy. Here's a slightly more detailed guide to its key economic pillars.



### **FINANCE AND BANKING**

At the core of Astana's business landscape is the Astana International Financial Centre, which operates under a separate legal framework based on English common law. It offers tax incentives, simplified regulations, and an international arbitration system, making it especially attractive for foreign investors. The presence of global institutions such as China Construction Bank strengthens Astana's role as a gateway for capital flows into Central Asia.

**approx.  
11.5% GDP**

### **Contribution to national GDP**

Driving one of the fastest-growing regional economies, supported by a strong service sector and continuous investment inflows.

**~30%  
construction  
growth**

### **Urban development in Astana**

Recorded in 2025, highlighting one of the fastest-growing construction sectors in the region.

# Astana's BUSINESS LANDSCAPE

## TRADE AND SERVICE ECONOMY

Trade and services form the backbone of the city's economy, driven by a growing middle class and increasing consumer demand. This includes retail, hospitality, education, and professional services. Local conglomerates like Astana Group contribute significantly by developing shopping centers, distribution systems, and commercial infrastructure, supporting both local consumption and business activity.

## INDUSTRY AND ENERGY

Although not traditionally an industrial city, Astana is strengthening its manufacturing and energy sectors. The focus is on construction materials, food processing, and mechanical engineering. National companies like KEGOC play a key role in maintaining and developing energy infrastructure, ensuring stable support for both businesses and residents.

## CONSTRUCTION AND URBAN DEVELOPMENT

Astana is known for its rapid urban expansion, with continuous development of residential areas, office spaces, and public infrastructure. This growth is fueled by population increase and government-led initiatives to modernize the capital. Major projects are often backed by state entities such as Samruk-Kazyna, which invests in infrastructure, real estate, and strategic urban development.

## LOGISTICS AND EMERGING TECH

Astana's central location makes it an important logistics node connecting Europe and Asia, particularly within regional trade corridors. The city is also investing in digital transformation, including smart city initiatives, IT parks, and startup ecosystems. This dual focus on logistics and technology is gradually positioning Astana as not only a transit hub but also an emerging center for innovation.

# top NEIGHBORHOODS



## **ESIL DISTRICT (LEFT BANK)**

Astana's modern core and the location of many government institutions, business towers, and landmark architecture. Ideal for professionals, diplomats, and expats who want proximity to offices, international restaurants, and cultural venues.

## **ALMATY DISTRICT**

A large residential district with a mix of older Soviet-era housing and newer developments. It offers more affordable apartments, everyday shopping areas, and a more local neighborhood atmosphere.

## **SARYARKA DISTRICT**

One of the city's older urban areas on the right bank of the river. It has dense residential blocks, traditional markets, and many small cafés, suitable for people who prefer a lively, authentic city environment.

# top NEIGHBORHOODS



## **NURZHOL BOULEVARD AREA**

Located around the city's central boulevard connecting key landmarks. The area is highly walkable and close to government buildings, parks, and cultural institutions. It attracts professionals, young residents, and visitors.

## **EXPO DISTRICT**

A newer urban zone developed around the Expo 2017 site. It features modern apartments, business parks, and innovation centers, making it popular with tech professionals and international companies.

## **YESIL RIVERSIDE**

A quieter residential area near the river with parks, promenades, and modern apartment complexes. Suitable for families or those seeking green spaces while remaining close to the city center.

# *about* ACCOMMODATION

## **SERVICED AND FURNISHED**

Astana offers many serviced apartments, especially in newer residential complexes. They are usually fully furnished and include Wi-Fi, equipped kitchens, washing machines, and sometimes building amenities like gyms or underground parking.

## **AVAILABILITY AND DEMAND**

Corporate housing is common due to the city's role as a government and business hub. Long-term stays are often arranged through agencies, while short-term rentals can be booked online. Winter conferences and business events may increase demand.

## **AMENITIES**

Modern apartment complexes often include concierge services, security systems, elevators, and indoor parking. Larger buildings frequently offer supermarkets, pharmacies, and cafés on the ground floors.

## **APARTMENT TYPES**

Apartments range from compact studio units to large family apartments. Many buildings are newly constructed, with modern interiors and energy-efficient systems designed to withstand Astana's cold winters.

# public TRANSPORT

## BUSES

City buses are the main public transport system operated by CTS City Transportation Systems. Routes connect most districts of Astana, including residential areas, business centers, and the airport.

## TRANSCARD

The local payment system uses the Transcard. It allows cashless payments on buses and can be topped up through kiosks or mobile apps.

[LEARN MORE](#)

## TAXIS

Ride-hailing apps are widely used in Astana and often provide the fastest way to get around the city. Popular services include Yandex Go and Uber, both available through mobile apps.

## DRIVING

Car ownership is common due to the city's wide roads and long distances between districts. Traffic is generally manageable compared with larger global capitals.

## ON FOOT OR BY BIKE

Central areas of Astana, especially around Nurzhol Boulevard and the Ishim River embankments, are pedestrian-friendly with wide promenades, parks, and modern public spaces. Cycling infrastructure is gradually expanding, and bike paths can be found in some parks and along major boulevards. However, the city is very spread out, so walking or cycling is often combined with public transport for longer distances.

# *must-see* ATTRACTIONS

## KHAN SHATYR

A giant transparent tent designed by architect Norman Foster. Inside are shopping malls, restaurants, and even an indoor tropical beach.

[LEARN MORE](#)

## PALACE OF PEACE AND RECONCILIATION

A pyramid-shaped cultural and conference center hosting international congresses, exhibitions, and cultural events. It symbolizes dialogue between cultures and religions.

[LEARN MORE](#)



## ASTANA OPERA

One of the largest opera houses in Central Asia, featuring classical ballet, opera performances, and concerts in a grand neoclassical building.

[LEARN MORE](#)

# *must-see* ATTRACTIONS

## BAITEREK TOWER

Famous monument and observation tower in the city center, famous for its rooftop view and intricate futuristic facade. Considered a symbol of post-independence Kazakhstan.

[LEARN MORE](#)



## NUR ALEM MUSEUM OF FUTURE ENERGY

The spherical centerpiece of the Expo 2017 site, now a museum dedicated to renewable energy, technology, and sustainability.

[LEARN MORE](#)

## HAZRAT SULTAN MOSQUE

A massive white marble mosque with impressive domes and Islamic architecture, located near the city's main square and government buildings.

[LEARN MORE](#)



# local CUISINE

## BESHBARMAK

Kazakhstan's national dish consisting of boiled meat (usually horse or lamb) served with flat noodles and onion sauce. Traditionally eaten with hands and often prepared for family gatherings.



## SHUBAT

A fermented camel milk drink popular in Central Asia. It has a slightly sour taste and is considered both refreshing and nutritious.



## KAZY

A traditional sausage made from horse meat and spices. It is commonly served during celebrations and important events and reflects the nomadic culinary heritage of the region.



## MANTI

Large steamed dumplings filled with minced meat and onions. They are widely available in restaurants and casual cafés across the city.



## BAURSAK

Famous Milanese sweet bread, especially popular during winter season. Made with butter, eggs, and dried fruit, it is one of Italy's most recognizable festive desserts.

## ASTANA'S GASTRONOMY SCENE

For a broader introduction to Astana's gastronomy, this page offers a helpful overview of local dishes to try and places worth visiting across the city.

[LEARN MORE](#)





# *do it* LIKE A LOCAL

## **TEA IS A SOCIAL RITUAL**

Tea culture plays a big role in everyday life. Guests are often offered tea with sweets or boursak, and long conversations around the table are common in homes and cafés.

## **DIGITAL PAYMENTS**

Many residents use the super-app Kaspi.kz for payments, shopping, and banking. QR payments are common in stores, taxis, and restaurants.

## **MULTILINGUAL COMMUNICATION**

Kazakh and Russian are widely spoken in the city. In business and international environments, English is increasingly common.

## **MALLS ARE SOCIAL SPACES**

Due to cold winters, shopping centers serve as popular gathering places. People often meet friends, dine, watch movies, and spend leisure time indoors.

# *remember,* **SAFETY FIRST**

## **EMERGENCY NUMBERS**



**112** GENERAL EMERGENCY NUMBER

**102** POLICE

**103** AMBULANCE

**101** FIRE DEPARTMENT

## **WINTER SAFETY**

Extreme cold and icy sidewalks are common in winter. Residents should wear appropriate footwear and avoid long outdoor exposure during severe cold waves.

## **STAY STREET SMART**

Astana is generally considered a safe city with relatively low crime rates. Most issues involve minor theft or pickpocketing in crowded areas such as markets or public transport.

## **SAFE RIDES ONLY**

Choose licensed taxis or well-known ride-hailing apps instead of hailing cars on the street. It's safer and usually cheaper.

## **KEEP COPIES HANDY**

Visitors should keep digital copies of passports and visas and carry identification when required.



*Hey there,  
this is me  
who prepared this  
cool loco  
for you!*

**Vladyslava Lypska**

Business Operations Ukraine - Team Lead

## DISCOVER MORE ON OUR BLOG

Explore RethinkRelo – our knowledge hub for relocation professionals, expats, and anyone adapting to life in a new city, featuring industry insights, expert advice and local guides.

VISIT OUR WEBSITE